



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60601

ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH
GOVERNOR

February 2, 2006

206-25
RECEIVED
CLERK'S OFFICE

FEB 02 2006

STATE OF ILLINOIS
Pollution Control Board

DC#1

Dear Members of the Illinois Pollution Control Board and the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules:

I am writing you to ask for your support of my plan to reduce mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants in Illinois – the largest single source of mercury contamination. Just this morning, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) issued yet another advisory warning about potentially dangerous mercury contamination in fish found in many Illinois waterways. The need for aggressive action to reduce mercury emissions grows more urgent every time our waterways are tested for contamination.

Today, IDPH issued its 2006 sports fish consumption advisories to warn Illinoisans not to eat too much fish caught in certain waterways in Illinois. Expanded testing of Illinois' lakes and streams led IDPH to add eleven more lakes streams to an already long list of Illinois waterways where pollution – including toxic mercury pollution – makes the fish unsafe to eat.

Exposure to unsafe levels of toxic mercury can cause well-known and potentially serious health problems, especially for pregnant women, women of childbearing age and children younger than 15 years. Developing fetuses can be exposed to mercury when a mother eats tainted fish and can suffer mental retardation, cerebral palsy, lower IQs, slow motor functions, deafness, blindness and other health problems. Recent studies indicate that as many as 10 percent of babies born each year in the United States are exposed to excessive mercury levels in the womb.

Since eating fish from contaminated waterways is the main source of mercury exposure, reducing mercury levels in our lakes, rivers and streams is the most prudent way to protect the public from this dangerous toxin. And because an estimated 43 percent of mercury emissions come from power plants – the largest man-made source – I announced last month a proposal to cut mercury emissions from power plants by 90 percent by June 30, 2009. If adopted, our new standard will reduce toxic mercury emissions faster and more thoroughly than the federal restrictions adopted last spring, and will achieve the largest overall amount of mercury reduction of any state in the country.

I am confident that currently available technology can affordably achieve these reductions without jeopardizing the availability of affordable and reliable electricity. The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) is now engaged in a participatory process of soliciting comments from power producers, organized labor, and other interested parties. I believe that

the rules IEPA will soon submit for your consideration strike the right balance between protecting public health and the environment without burdening ratepayers, power producers or Illinois' economy. I hope that you will agree with me that IEPA's thoughtfully drafted rules meet your expectations of a fair and balanced approach. Ultimately, we should all be able to agree that both the public and the sporting community should be able to consume the Illinois fish they catch without fearing serious risk to their health.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Rod Blagojevich". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rod" and last name "Blagojevich" clearly legible.

Rod R. Blagojevich
Governor